



Arizona Registrar of Contractors

Message from Israel G. Torres, Director

CONTENTS:

Director's Message | Investigations Update | Features

November 2005

Sign-up for ROC e-news | ROC Home

Proactive enforcement efforts continue as scam season begins

ROC busts 20 in Sierra Vista sting operations

Fall and winter are "prime time" for criminal transient unlicensed contractors to flock to the warmer areas of our state. Keeping this in mind, the ROC is committed to continuing its proactive enforcement operations in areas hit hard by unlicensed contracting scams and aims to stop unlicensed work before it starts. By conducting statewide undercover stings, the agency will help prevent crimes against Arizona residents, protect area homeowners and the legitimate, licensed contracting industry.

The ROC conducted its most recent unlicensed contracting undercover sting operation in Sierra Vista, netting 20 individuals who illegally bid on projects that required an Arizona contractors licensed. The jobs that were bid on in the course of the operation totaled approximately \$175,000 and ranged from painting to electrical, concrete work to remodeling. One particularly bold individual bid \$32,000 to perform landscaping work! As a result of the sting, 12 unlicensed contractors will pay civil penalties up to \$2,000, while eight others are being charged criminally for illegally bidding on jobs that require a license.

These undercover sting operations in Sierra Vista are yet another important part of our efforts to convey the message that unlicensed and unscrupulous contracting is illegal in Arizona and will be punished. Unlicensed contractors should use the ROC as a resource and get licensed. The agency provides instruction and assistance for getting licensed through its Small Business Advocate program, which helps aspiring contractors meet the necessary requirements to do just that.

Especially this time of year, homeowners and seniors in particular need to be vigilant when hiring someone for a construction, repair or remodeling job. Criminal transient contractors make their living by knocking on doors and convincing homeowners that they can cut them a "great deal" with left over materials or a special offer that is "only good for today." These limited-time offers should put the consumer on notice that something is not right - in today's busy construction industry, licensed, legitimate contractors do not go door to door using high pressure tactics.

Remember this advice to help make your next home construction or improvement project a successful one:

1. Make sure the individual you hire has an Arizona contractors license that is in good standing. To check a license, call 602-542-1525 or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286 or visit www.azroc.gov.
2. Remember that if your home remodeling or repair project costs more than \$750 (labor *and* materials included) or requires a building permit, you should always hire a licensed contractor.
3. When you use someone who is not licensed, you forfeit your ability to have the ROC assist you in correcting faulty work, as well as accessing the ROC Residential Contractors Recovery Fund.
4. If someone approaches your door and offers something that sounds too good to be true, get them off of your property and report the incident to the ROC.

Investigations Update

Munds Park man takes almost \$17,000 from local homeowner

11-21-05: The ROC recently learned that Matthew Brian Wedemeyer accepted almost \$17,000 from a Munds Park homeowner to perform remodeling work. After doing some shoddy work on the project, Wedemeyer abandoned the job without returning the money to the customer. Upon investigation, ROC investigators discovered that Wedemeyer is an unlicensed contractor with two prior complaints, and was convicted in Williams City Court for unlicensed contracting. The case was turned over to Flagstaff Justice Court, where he was charged with one count of unlicensed contracting.



Consumer Alert for Paradise Valley Area

11-21-05: Jaime Amaya, an unlicensed contractor, contracted to perform a residential remodeling project totaling \$40,750 for a local homeowner. After being paid more than \$23,000, Amaya's services were terminated by the homeowner for poor workmanship. The ROC forwarded the case to the city of Paradise Valley Prosecutor's Office for criminal prosecution and restitution for the victim.

Williams homeowners urged to be on the lookout

11-21-05: Coconino County residents are urged to be on the lookout for Rick Dawson, an unlicensed contractor whose latest victim paid him \$11,500 to build a metal structure, which he did not complete. Dawson is a revoked contractor with a prior conviction for

Keeping these tips in mind will help you, your neighbors *and* the ROC protect Arizona from unlicensed contracting scams that target our homeowners and seniors!



Israel G. Torres, Director

[Top](#)

Renew your license quickly and easily...24 hours a day!

To help contractors save time and money, the ROC launched online license renewal services in August of this year. Since then, thousands of licensees have taken advantage of this new web-based system, which has made the renewal process easier and more efficient. Now, by using this convenient Internet service, contractors can renew according to their own schedules without having to make a trip to one of the ROC's offices.



Each month, contractors receive their renewal packets in the mail, which include a unique personal identification number (PIN), and a brochure that walks them through the steps of the online system, and provides tips on what materials are needed to begin the online renewal process. After receiving a PIN enclosed in the renewal packet, users can access the service by visiting the ROC's Web site at www.azroc.gov and clicking on the link, "Online License Renewal."

[Top](#)

ROC launches woman-focused contractor workshop series to a full house

The ROC kicked off its three-part Women in Construction Workshop series with Part One: Getting to Know Your ROC, on Nov. 8. Current woman contractors, aspiring contractors and employees of contractors attended the workshop, giving rave reviews for the information and discussion provided in the seminar. Participants gained an understanding of the ROC's role in regulating the contracting industry, as well as the agency's programs and services for contractors.



ROC Director Torres discusses contractor licensing with a Women in Construction Workshop participant after a highly successful seminar.

The second workshop, Getting Your ROC License, will be held on Jan. 10, followed by Part Three: Maintaining Your ROC License, on Jan. 19.

Through these workshops, the nuts and bolts of how to get licensed and how to maintain and renew your license will be covered.

These free events will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on their respective dates, at the ROC main office, 800 W. Washington St., in Phoenix.

Don't miss this opportunity

unlicensed contracting earlier this year. He was charged in Williams Justice Court with one count of unlicensed contracting.

Revoked concrete contractor takes Laveen homeowner for \$18,000

11-21-05: Laveen homeowners are advised not to do business with Mario A. Cruz of MAC's Concrete. Without the required ROC license, he contracted to do work in the amount of \$18,000. Cruz, whose license was revoked in October of 2004, performed shoddy work on the project, prompting the homeowner to contact the ROC.

Protect yourself against unlicensed contracting scams!

To report possible fraudulent home improvement activities or if you have been approached door-to-door by someone claiming to be a contractor, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 or toll-free outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, or visit www.azroc.gov. Check the company's license status and report the company to the agency if you suspect a scam.

[Top](#)

to learn how to have the most successful experience possible in Arizona's booming construction industry! To register for either of the workshops, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525, or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, ext. 7106, or complete a simple registration form online at www.azroc.gov/wic.

[Top](#)

Southern Arizona host to latest ROC statewide outreach activities

As the agency strives to continuously work as a partner with homeowners and licensed contractors, the ROC has conducted several outreach programs throughout southern Arizona in October and November.



As scam season gets underway in areas that have mild winter climates, the ROC Neighborhood Ambassador Program went "on the road" to communities in Sierra Vista in late October, and Oro Valley, Nogales and Rio Rico in November. More than 100 homeowners attended these workshops to learn how to identify, prevent and report criminal transient contracting scams in their neighborhoods.

The ROC also visited industry groups in these areas, sharing information about the agency's new initiatives and services to contractors, including online license renewal and the Women in Construction Workshop series. The Southeastern Arizona Contractors Association in Sierra Vista and the Alliance of Construction Trades in Tucson hosted the ROC at their monthly gatherings to hear the latest agency news and to share their thoughts about contracting in Arizona.

The ROC is here to work with you - to schedule a Neighborhood Ambassador Program presentation for your neighborhood association, local service group or senior center, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525, ext. 7115, or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286. For contractor association presentations, contact the ROC at the phone numbers above, ext. 7106.

[Top](#)

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[ROC Home](#)